

Portugal, and received many other Orders and Honours from Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Servia, and Spain. His last communication to this Journal ("Sur le Waldrapp de Gessner") appeared as lately as January of this year (see above, p. 139), and we have been informed that he continued his usual work nearly up to the time of his decease, which took place at Geneva on the 18th of March last, in the 67th year of his age.

XXXV.—*Letters, Notes, and Extracts.*

WE have received the following letters addressed to "The Editors of 'The Ibis'":—

Note on the Eggs of Ross's Rosy Gull (Plate XX.).—In a previous number of this Journal ('Ibis,' 1906, pp. 131-139) Mr. S. A. Buturlin gave us a most interesting account of his discovery of the breeding-grounds of the rare Ross's Gull (*Rhodostethia rosea*) in the delta of the Kolymá River in North-eastern Siberia. I have now received from him some of its eggs, sent in order that I might have them figured, as they are undoubtedly the first authentic eggs of this species that have as yet been received in Europe. In the article above referred to Mr. Buturlin has given such full particulars of the nidification and breeding-habits that I need say nothing further here, except to remark that these eggs, as will be seen from the figures (Plate XX.), cannot be mistaken for those of any other Gull, except perhaps those of *Xema sabinii*. From the latter, however, they may be distinguished by being decidedly green in the tone of their colour, whereas those of *Xema sabinii* are not so, and by having the surface of the shell dull and glossless, whereas the eggs of Sabine's Gull are somewhat glossy. Together with the eggs of *Rhodostethia rosea*, Mr. Buturlin has sent me eggs of the following species, viz.:—*Sterna macrura* (this being the species referred to in his article, p. 135 footnote), *Larus glaucus*, *Phalaropus fulicarius*, *Nettion*



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EGGS OF RHODOSTETHIA ROSEA.

formosum, *Anser gambeli*, *Anser serrirostris*, *Chelidon lagopoda*, *Anthus cervinus*, *Anthus gustavi*, *Motacilla viridis*, *Linota exilipes*, *Phylloscopus borealis*, and *Cyanecula suecica*, all taken by him at or near the mouth of the Kolymá River.
—H. E. DRESSER.

SIRS,—I have just been looking over the January number of a monthly magazine (the ‘Ornithologische Monatschrift’), published at Dresden by the “Deutscher Verein zum Schutze der Vogelwelt.” To my astonishment and disgust, I find (pp. 16–42, pls. i., ii., iii., iv.) an article on a trip to Iceland with four illustrations taken from photographs, one of which represents a collector gloating over 240 eggs of the Great Skua (*Megalestris catarrhactes*) obtained on that occasion. I have always looked on the above-named “Verein” as being a Society for the Protection of Birds, with similar views to those of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds in this country. But if this be the case, how can the “Verein” have consented to the publication of such an article and illustration in their Journal, and how could the Danish authorities in Iceland have permitted such a vandalism, especially as they are supposed to be in favour of the protection (not destruction) of birds? The writer of the article in question is evidently a mere collector, probably employed by some dealer, as no true naturalist would need such a quantity of eggs of the same species. Nor would he be guilty of such a crime as to harry in this fashion the breeding-places of a bird which, in most parts of its nesting-range, is becoming so scarce as to need very careful protection in order to prevent its extinction.

Nothing is said in the article itself as to the number of eggs of the various species obtained, but, seeing that as many as 240 eggs of the Great Skua alone were taken, it may be supposed that every possible egg on the island that would be of any value to a dealer, more especially every egg of a rare species of bird that could by any means be secured, would be carried off. If such proceedings are tolerated by the

Authorities in Iceland, not only the Great Skua but every other rare bird which now breeds on that island will become practically extinct.

I am, Sirs,

Yours &c.,

28 Queensborough Terrace,
London, W.
19th April, 1906.

H. E. DRESSER.

Note on Emberiza citriniventris.—I am sorry to find that, as has been pointed out to me by Mr. Witherby, the Bunting which I described and figured in the last number of this Journal (above, p. 313, Pl. XV.) as *Emberiza citriniventris* had been previously named by Mr. N. Sarudny in the 'Ornithologisches Jahrbuch' for 1904. There can be no doubt, I think, that Mr. Sarudny's *Emberiza (Hypocentor) semenowi* (*op. cit.* xv. p. 217), which was based on three specimens obtained by him in the Persian province of Arabistan in February and March 1904, is the same as my *E. citriniventris*.

The name given to this Bunting by Mr. Sarudny has undoubted priority, and I can only express my regret that I had unfortunately overlooked his clear description.—P. L. S.

The Wild Swan of Seistan.—In reply to enquiries about the specimen of the Wild Swan of Seistan sent to the Indian Museum by Sir Henry McMahon (see above, p. 398), the following letter has been received from Dr. Annandale:—

SIRS,—The specimen about which you enquire was presented to the Indian Museum some months ago. On receiving your letter I examined the skin, and compared it with that of a European *Cygnus musicus*. It appears to me to be a perfectly normal specimen of that species, the yellow on the bill extending well below the nostril. The size closely follows that of the European specimen with which I have compared it.

NELSON ANNANDALE.

Indian Museum, Calcutta.
20th March, 1906.

Since this letter was received Dr. Annandale has kindly sent us a coloured sketch of the head of this specimen. We agree with him that it represents a not quite adult example of *Cygnus musicus*, and Mr. Dresser, who has examined the sketch, is of the same opinion. The Wild Swan of Seistan is, therefore, so far as we can say at present, *Cygnus musicus*.

Mr. Woosnam's Expedition to Ruwenzori.—Since the issue of our last number (see above, p. 400) good accounts have been received of Mr. Woosnam's Expedition to Ruwenzori, where a permanent camp had been established at a height of about 6000 feet. A letter from Mr. Carruthers, dated "Feb. 4th, Pinnacle Camp, Ruwenzori," says "everything is progressing well: the collection (of birds and mammals) is nearing one thousand specimens obtained in five weeks' collecting. Butterflies, moths, and beetles (besides) are pouring in, and our Doctor is putting together a good series of plants. We continue to have lovely weather, very little rain, and we hope that this may last another month at least."

Mr. Carruthers gives some account of an excursion up the mountain to the foot of the glacier, in which the party seems to have followed the trail made by Messrs. Maddox, Tegart, and Grauer (described in a letter to 'The Times' of April 14th last), and to have reached a height of about 14,000 feet. About 60 specimens of birds and mammals had been obtained, and amongst them was "a gorgeous Sun-bird, with a tail eight inches long, which haunts the valley just below the glacier." The explorers believe that this "is an entirely new bird."

We see that Mr. Woosnam and Mr. Carruthers have further distinguished themselves by making the first ascent of Ruwenzori (see 'Times,' June 1st, 1906).

Return of the 'Valhalla.'—The Earl of Crawford's steam-yacht the 'Valhalla,' R.Y.S., reached Cowes Roads on her return voyage on May 13th. After leaving Cape Town on

Feb. 8th (see above, p. 394) the 'Valhalla' passed up the Mozambique Channel, but was unable to visit the islands there (as had been intended) owing to bad weather. The next places landed at were, therefore, Mayotte, Comoro Islands, and Diego Suarez, N.E. Madagascar, at both of which collections were made. Thence the yacht proceeded to the islands of Glorioso, Assumption, and Aldabra, and subsequently to the Seychelles, where Mahé, Praslin, and Félicité were visited. The return home was made by the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. During the voyage Mr. Nicoll collected rather more than 500 specimens of birds, besides mammals, fishes, and other animals.

Mr. Nicoll and Mr. Meade-Waldo both attended the meeting of the B. O. C. on May 16th, and gave an account of their most interesting journey (see Bull. B. O. C. xvi. pp. 92-95).

Lord Crawford has presented the whole of the collections made during this voyage to the British Museum, and Mr. Nicoll is now engaged in working out the birds. We hope to be able to publish his account of them in one of the next numbers of this Journal.

Mr. Scott's Investigation of Bird-life.—Mr. W. E. D. Scott, the author of 'The Story of a Bird-lover,' writes to us on February 12th from "Shawnee on Delaware, Pennsylvania," the headquarters of the "Worthington Society for the Investigation of Bird-life," of which he is now Director, that he has been fully engaged in building operations during the past eighteen months. A series of indoor Aviaries "with spacious outdoor flights" has been completed, as also a library, a series of studies, a large laboratory, and rooms for the attendants and officers. Ten large outdoor aviaries are also ready, and twenty-five breeding-cages are in process of construction. In these will be carried on practical experiments in breeding, matters of heredity, and the like.

Committee of Inquiry on the Grouse-disease.—In April last year a Committee of Inquiry on the Grouse-disease was appointed by the Board of Agriculture, and requested to report whether any, and if so, what precautionary measures can be taken against it. Lord Lovat was appointed Chairman and Mr. A. S. Leslie (33 Queen Street, Edinburgh) Secretary to the Committee, and it was agreed that the necessary expenses should be raised by private subscription amongst those interested in the subject. Several meetings have been held during the past year, and Dr. Seligman, Mr. A. E. Shipley, F.R.S., and Dr. Hammond Smith have been selected as scientific experts, to aid in the inquiry upon technical questions. As chief Field-observer the Committee have appointed Dr. Edward Wilson (late of the Antarctic Expedition), assisted by the Rev. E. A. W. Peacock, who has made a special study of the food of game-birds. A large number of local correspondents have also kindly offered their services.

The Committee have been at work since last November. Curiously enough, there has been no fresh outbreak of the disease during the past year, but the Committee have an ample field of work before them.

Captain Boyd Alexander's Expedition.—Since we wrote in July last year of the progress of Captain Boyd Alexander's Trans-African Expedition (see 'Ibis,' 1905, p. 506) we have received a letter from him, dated at Irene, near the river Ba-Mingui, August 8th, 1905, stating that the party had made a good journey up the river Shari from Fort Lamy, and that, after exploring the Ba-Mingui, they would proceed to Yakoma on the Ubanghi. The bird-collection then numbered nearly 1400 specimens, amongst which were some novelties of great interest. Since that date, we have obtained information that the expedition had succeeded in crossing the water-parting into the Congo-Basin, and had arrived on the Ubanghi. The last letter received by Captain Alexander's family was dated from Mbima, on the river Welle, a confluent

of the Ubaughi, whence it was thought that in about four months the travellers would be able to reach the Nile at Lado or Gondokoro. The boats which they had taken with them had received many rude knocks, but were still serviceable. They were expecting to leave Mbima the next day for Bomokande, a station about ten days further up the Welle, and would thence proceed to Donga at the mouth of the Kibali, after which their exact course was rather uncertain.

Gaetke's Ornithological Diary.—In a special extra number of the 'Journal für Ornithologie' for this year is published a transcript of the Ornithological Diary kept by Gaetke on Heligoland from 1817 to 1887 inclusive, edited by Dr. Rudolf Blasius. The entries usually record the kind of weather and the principal birds obtained and observed each day, with their scientific names. In some years nearly every day has an entry; in other years there are very few, *e. g.* in 1865 only one. This record is of great interest, especially to students of migration, and will, no doubt, receive much attention as part of the material upon which the "Vogelwarte" was based.

The Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris.—We understand that the vacancy in the staff of Professors at the Jardin des Plantes, Paris, caused by the death of the late Emile Oustalet, has been filled by the appointment of Dr. E. L. Trouessart, the well-known author of the 'Catalogus Mammalium.' Dr. Trouessart will, like his predecessor, have the charge of the Mammals and Birds in the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle as well as the superintendence of the collection of those animals living in the Jardin des Plantes.